

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 07 BRUSSELS 000442

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PRM/PRP, PRM/ECA; EUR/ERA AND CA/F. DHS
PLEASE PASS ELAINE DEZENSKI; USDOJ FOR CRIMINAL DIVISION -
BRUCE SWARTZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SMIG](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [EUN](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)

SUBJECT: MIGRATION MANAGEMENT: REGIONAL APPROACH FOR EU AND
NEIGHBORS PROPOSED AT MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

11. (U) Summary. At a ministerial conference held on January 24-25, EU officials and counterparts from eastern and south neighbors launched the "Vienna Process" to improve migration management via a structured, regional dialogue and a joint program of action. Major themes of the conference -- which was co-hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Government of Belgium (OSCE chair), the Government of Austria (EU Presidency) and the European Commission -- included the effect of migration on diplomatic relations, security, and human rights. Senior European interlocutors enunciated the benefits of migration in reversing falling population rates, energizing the economy and offering protection to those fleeing persecution. The Austrian Presidency, however, kept a focus on migration's downside: security threats and social tension. The European Commission will spend three percent of its neighborhood policy budget to improve migration management in the region. Regarding bilateral U.S.-EU issues, DHS Acting Assistant Secretary Dezenski touched on the future of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), US VISIT, the Rice-Chertoff Initiative and migrant integration. A follow-up ministerial conference, to which the U.S. is invited, will be held May 4-5 in Vienna and will focus primarily on migration and security. End Summary.

Austrian Presidency: Stress on Security, Problems

12. (U) In her opening statement, Austria's Interior Minister Liese Prokop stated that migration has been "a constant feature of human history" which has enhanced global economic growth while simultaneously creating major social and political problems. Noting that the number of international migrants doubled in the last 25 years, with the majority ending up in developed countries, she acknowledged the importance that the EU's neighbors attach to migration. She said the Austrian Presidency would work to effectively strengthen migration management within the EU, including the establishment of "rapid assistance teams" that can help Member States during emergencies (e.g., storming the land borders of the Spanish enclaves, onslaught of maritime arrivals in Malta, Spain and Italy, etc.).

13. (U) Prokop stressed the link between migration management and the security of the union by noting that most security threats originate outside the EU. She said the Austrian Presidency will work to establish an external strategy in JHA issues by improving dialogue and cooperation with third countries.

14. (U) Prokop said that the international dimension of the EU's policy would include strengthening refugee protection mechanisms in regions of origin and transit and hoped that pilot projects to the east (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) and to the south (Tanzania) would begin during the Austrian Presidency. Regarding asylum, Prokop pledged to work towards a common European system that would prevent abuse. The system would include common information on countries of origin and common return standards when deporting failed asylum seekers.

European Commission: Stress on Benefits, Cooperation

15. (U) Fellow Austrian Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighborhood Policy, took a more upbeat line on the benefits of international migration, while acknowledging problems. She said that if the EU were to become relevant to European publics, it needed to address present-day concerns of the citizens such as migration. According to Ferrero-Waldner, negative perceptions about migrants were "based more on emotion than fact" and tended to become more acute during uncertain times.

16. (U) "The truth is: Europe needs migration," Ferrero-Waldner stated bluntly. Speaking about Austria, she said that without immigration, its population would shrink 25 percent by 2050. On the other hand, immigration could spur economic growth by attracting brains and labor from outside,

she argued, and cited the U.S. as a model for attracting skilled labor.

17. (U) Ferrero-Waldner also touched on the dangers of clandestine voyages, the possibility of sex slavery and alienation after arriving, the effect of brain drain in countries of origin and families hardships caused by separation. With regard to border control, she said the EU needed a "more nuanced, better suited" approach. "Fortress Europe is not an option," she emphasized. The Commissioner announced a new thematic program for migration management more in keeping with today's world which will provide focus on five areas: 1) ensuring migration contributes to development; 2) promoting migration to face the EU's demographic, social and economic challenges; 3) fighting illegal immigration; 4) protecting migrants from exploitation and exclusion; and 5) promoting international protection and ensuring respect of migrants' rights.

18. (U) To accomplish this, Ferrero-Waldner announced that up to 3% of the European Neighborhood Policy and other external relations budgets would support these key themes. "We have put migration on the agenda of political, economic and social dialogues with many non-Member States." Funds will be used to intensify migration dialogues, strengthen institutional capacities of neighboring states, improve border control, strengthen document security, upgrade reception facilities for asylum seekers, protect and rehabilitate victims of trafficking, and reintegrate returnees in countries of origin. Future initiatives could include facilitating the flow of remittances and encouraging development-oriented investment, providing pre-departure information for legal migrants wishing to emigrate, and encouraging contributions of the diaspora communities to aid countries of origin.

19. (U) (Note. These funds will also be used to support the implementation of readmission agreements -- i.e., used to pay third countries to take back illegal migrants. In his conference speech, Director General for Justice Freedom and Security Jonathan Faull stressed the importance of readmission agreements. He noted that another price neighboring countries exacted for the EU for them was "visa facilitation" agreements. Faull said that the Commission does not accept the logic of tying readmission to visa facilitation, but it was a "political reality" that the EU had to live with. End note.)

10. (U) Emphasizing the positive in concluding her remarks, Ferrero-Waldner urged her colleagues to "be more courageous in explaining to our publics the true nature of migration and its impact." She also called for sufficient funding to ensure for more rational and balanced migration policies throughout the EU.

Member States: Some benefits, some costs

11. (U) Belgian Foreign Minister and conference host Karel de Gucht said that no foreign policy strategy makes sense without a migration component. Echoing the Commissioner's speech, he called for a "long-term vision that goes beyond border controls." De Gucht cited the contributions of many Italians, Spaniards, Moroccans and Turks in strengthening Belgium's economy and stressed that participation in the labor market is key to integration. To emphasize this point, he noted that those who had arrived with labor contracts and began working became much better integrated than the second and third generations who are often unemployed and frustrated. The Belgian Foreign Minister also pointed to the U.S. as a model and said that the EU needed to attract 800,000 researchers if it were to compete effectively with the U.S.

12. (U) Belgian Interior Minister Patrick Dewael also addressed the conference and stressed the need for a strong EU readmission policy in managing migration. He urged protection for victims of trafficking and refugees, but noted the EU could not absorb them all. Dewael called for EU Member States to harmonize their migration policies and concluded that controlled immigration needed to be part of the solution to the EU's demographic challenges.

13. (U) Speaking on behalf of Germany, Parliamentary State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Interior Peter Altmaier

SIPDIS
observed that between 1990 and 2005 his country had experienced a net gain of 4.5 million immigrants (13 million arrivals and 8.5 million departures) -- which he noted was a population larger than some EU Member States. Like his Austrian counterpart, Altmaier played some lip service to the positive aspects of immigration while stressing the downside (e.g., criminal activities, unemployment, integration).

14. (U) Referring to asylum, Altmaier said that although the

number of applications in Germany had dropped from a high of about 430,000 per year in the early 1990's to a current 30,000 per year, the recognition rate had remained at under one percent. He called for a homogenous asylum system in the EU with a common list of "safe countries" and common database on county of origin information. Regarding citizenship, Altmaier urged other countries to respect Germany's legislation prohibiting dual nationality and said foreign governments should not allow naturalized Germans who renounced their former nationalities to regain them.

European Parliament: Humanitarian considerations

¶15. (U) Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Graham Watson (UK Liberal) said that with an estimated 500,000 illegal immigrants entering the EU every year and 250,000 new asylum applications each year, action needed to be taken. He noted that "migrations are necessary" and emphasized the humanitarian imperative of international protection. Graham also noted the positive effect on developing countries that stems from migration. He lauded the Commission's new thematic program, which he hoped would result in migration being viewed as an opportunity rather than a problem.

¶16. (U) With regard to the integration of migrants, MEP Doris Pack (German Conservative) highlighted specific problems that relate to women. She said that women tend to be more vulnerable and often face greater challenges due to family responsibilities. Pack called for more assistance to asylum seekers in acquiring language and work skills. She said that asylum seekers needed to be effective in the host country while awaiting a decision on their asylum applications.

¶17. (U) MEP Sarah Ludsford (UK Liberal) defended the free movement of people while acknowledging that unregulated migration is problematic. She stated that legal migration had greatly benefited London and was greatly needed in the EU overall, but she opposed EU-established immigration quotas. Ludsford said it was important to stress to migrants that integration is dynamic and a two-way street. Migrants have to adapt to the lifestyle of the host society without losing their cultural identity and host countries needed to adapt institutions and government policies to the new influences of the migrants and facilitate access to decision makers.

Eastern Neighbors: Migration problematic

¶19. (U) Russia and Belarus stressed the importance of managing migration, both within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and across the EU's Schengen border. Russian Ambassador Vladimir Chizhov characterized migration as "one of the most burning and complex issues of this country" since the fall of the iron curtain. He expressed gratitude to international partners who had supported the ten-year CIS Conference Process that took place from 1996 - 2006 and tackled issues such as forced migrations, ethnic conflicts, deep economic transformations and its effect on labor migration. Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriu Gaisenk said was spearheading an "action-oriented dialogue" to carry forward the work of the CIS Conference, which would involve IOM, UNHCR and other relevant international organizations (OSCE, CoE, etc.). He invited all CIS and EU countries, as well as other interested countries, to join this Minsk-based dialogue.

¶20. (U) Gaisenk outlined the many actions being taken by Belarus to combat irregular migration and trafficking in persons. He said that Belarus had proposed a global partnership at the UN to combat trafficking and was also initiating a pilot project on biometrics with the help of IOM.

¶21. (U) Chizhov noted that there are now about 5 million foreign migrants living in Russia and called on the EU to help fund activities to strengthen Russia's southern border as the first line of defense in thwarting unauthorized movements to the EU. He said that Russia would sign in the coming days a memorandum with the EU's new FRONTEX border management agency to formalize cooperation on border issues. He also mentioned Russia's decision to incorporate biometric identifiers in passports and visas to improve border security.

U.S.: Western Hemisphere and transatlantic dialogues important

¶22. (U) Speaking on a panel devoted to migration and security, DHS Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy Development Elaine Dezenski noted cooperation among Western Hemisphere countries in ways that "both enhance security and

respect civil liberties."

123. (U) She listed U.S. priorities, as follows: 1) to further secure North America from external threats through a perimeter or hemispheric approach; 2) to better prevent and respond to threats within North America, including natural disasters such as the recent hurricanes that ravaged the Southern United States; and 3) to streamline the secure and efficient movement of legitimate and low-risk traffic across our shared borders through a North American traveler security strategy that includes standards on travel and nationality documents as well as the development of equivalent approaches for traveler screening systems and information sharing arrangements between such systems.

124. (U) Regarding bilateral U.S.-EU issues, Dezenski touched on the future of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), US VISIT, the Rice-Chertoff Initiative and migrant integration. An excerpt of her prepared speech on transatlantic issues follows:

BEGIN QUOTE

DHS has also worked hard with our international partners outside of the western hemisphere. Europe remains one of our closest and most important partners. In 2004, then Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security, Asa

SIPDIS

Hutchison and Director General for Justice, Liberty and Security, Jonathan Faull created the Policy Dialogue on Border and Transportation Security to identify and discuss emerging policy issues related to cross border movements before they became areas of discord. This biannual venue has been critical to building ties and improving awareness of each others goals and has helped us to improve understanding of vital programs and work towards common solutions to shared problems.

Our bilateral relationships with Europe also remain central to our concept of border management. The Visa Waiver Program or VWP is an excellent example of how we work with our partners to facilitate legitimate travelers while cooperatively strengthening the security of our borders. After September 11th many members of Congress felt that the program left the door wide open for abuse by those with a desire to stay just long enough to commit an act of terrorism. The Bush Administration and DHS fought hard to keep this program alive by creating new systems and processes to better meet the statutory requirements. . . . It has been a tough road.

We greatly appreciate the cooperation we've received from all of the VWP countries and acknowledge their significant steps to improve the security of international travel. For example, Belgium, our host country today, was the first country in the world to begin full implementation of a biometric passport. Your cooperation enables us to demonstrate to Congress that the VWP can be a pillar in the war on terrorism, with cutting edge best practices and technologies that improve our collective security.

As a result, when President Bush and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski announced the creation of the Roadmap process in February 2005 it was on a solid base. Today Consular Working Groups have been established in eleven nations not currently in the VWP to identify steps that each of these countries could take to meet the program requirements and eventually seek nomination. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary Tarka for Poland's recent launch of a working group. The United States looks forward to working with both governments as part of this process.

We are optimistic that through this process we can eventually reach a point where all our partner nations in the EU receive visa waiver privileges and requirements. The second half of our vision, however, must be one in which we have done the hard work necessary to address the security, general law enforcement and immigration and border control issues that might impede each countries progress toward that goal. We need to maintain the integrity of this program and be absolutely sure that VWP membership does not open the door to abuse by terrorists and criminals. Otherwise, we may find ourselves without a VWP.

The Roadmap is a truly cooperative process and individual roadmaps will vary depending on the history, geography, economy and political needs and desires of each country as well as their relationships with their neighbors and the larger global community. We recognize that this may take some time. We also look to our colleagues in the European Union, OSCE and elsewhere to help in developing conditions in each country that will help them meet the criteria. We cannot provide you with a checklist, but I can promise that we will work closely with you.

Both bilaterally and multilaterally we are working to identify new and improved tools for determining how to screen people crossing the border. We appreciate the partnership of the European Union, Interpol, the UN and G8, and others in driving towards better solutions to verifying the validity of travel documents. We have a lot of work to do yet, but this is clearly a problem that requires an international solution. Of course, effective cooperation with our international partners requires DHS to maintain effective policies and programs domestically. A major part of that effort is the use

of biometrics in border screening. Identity management through biometrics is key to enhancing security, facilitating travel, enforcing immigration laws, and identifying the bad guys.

The Department's hallmark effort in this area is the United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology, or US-VISIT program. US-VISIT collects biometric and biographic information on international travelers to verify their identity and to build an entry and exit record of their trip to the United States. To capture biometrics, US-VISIT electronically scans a visitor's index fingers and takes a digital photograph -- all in the space of seconds. The biometrics captured by US-VISIT allow consular and immigration officials to confidently tie travelers to the visas and passports they are carrying.

US-VISIT has allowed us to unravel the assumed identities of hundreds of foreign nationals attempting to unlawfully enter the United States. For example, a routine US-VISIT check by inspection officers at John F. Kennedy International Airport showed that a visitor was using an alias. Further checks revealed two prior arrests for drug trafficking, a subsequent failure to appear in court and visa fraud. The traveler presented a fraudulent visa he had used to enter the United States more than 60 times without being detected by standard biographic record checks. US-VISIT has helped us to identify and deny entry to some 980 other undesirable individuals through the use of biometrics. It's not possible to know how many terrorists or criminals have been frightened away from attempting to enter our country because of US-VISIT, but I have no doubt that the number is substantial. Best of all, we are able to achieve results like this without inconveniencing legitimate travelers.

We are also constantly evaluating our efforts to determine how to make the United States a more welcoming place. In fact, just last week, Secretary Chertoff and Secretary of State Rice announced the Rice-Chertoff initiative -- a three part program to roll out the welcome mat. This new ideal was founded on two very basic truths -- that travel, tourism and business economically benefit both the individuals home country and destination and that seeing freedom first hand is critical to its growth.

Through RCI, we're working on making every visa applicant's interaction with the U.S. government easier and more convenient, with an initial focus on student and business travelers. This effort may eventually lead to the elimination of the visa as we know it and its replacement with an e-visa that may even have been obtained after a remote interview. We are also creating a more transparent entry process, providing clear, friendly instruction to arriving travelers and creating a simpler redress process for those that still, unfortunately, have a bad experience. On the back end, all of this will be supported by improved information sharing and more secure travel documents.

As we address security in the context of migration, recent events here in Western Europe reinforce the need for governments, as well as communities, to promote effective integration of new immigrants, their children and grandchildren.

About 100 years ago, "Americanization" -- as the policy was called -- sought to promote civic literacy, English language acquisition, and cultural assimilation. Immigrants then were expected to adopt to the prevailing Anglo-American culture. The civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's shifted our focus from cultural to civic integration.

Today, we believe, that, despite differences in background, all Americans are bound together by a set of enduring civic principles as relevant today as they were the day our Constitution. Americans embrace the ideals of freedom and opportunity, equality before the law, respect and tolerance for difference, the value of work and self-sufficiency and the primacy of individual citizens and their rights in governing our nation. We strive to enact these ideals in our laws and demonstrate them in our everyday civic life. We welcome immigrants who want to make the U.S. their home and join us in honoring these principles.

Our goal is to ensure that new immigrants and naturalized citizens understand and identify with the constitutional principles that define what being American is about.

END QUOTE

Next Steps

25. (U) A follow-on ministerial conference will be held in Vienna, May 4 - 5, and will conclude with a "Vienna Declaration" on ways to extend the EU's ambitious Hague Program on Justice and Home Affairs matters to neighboring countries. In this way, the EU hopes that its immediate neighbors will enhance national systems and structures to effectively manage migration flows in ways that reduce trafficking in human beings, organized crime and unmanageable surges of migrant labor.

Comment

¶26. (U) In each 2005 and 2006, the Commission has budgeted over 100 million euros to strengthen migration management outside the EU. The annual amount should increase significantly in the next budget cycle, currently under discussion. In putting its money where its mouth is, the EU is acknowledging the priority which both governments and citizens alike attach to sound migration policies. The January 24 - 25 conference featured over 10 cabinet level ministers from EU Member States and neighbors to the east and south, along with top-tier officials from the European Commission and international organizations. There is no doubt that migration is at the top of the political agenda, as well. Regional dialogues can play an important role in mitigating the thorny aspects of international migration.

¶27. (U) The follow-up ministerial conference May 4 -5 in Vienna will take place back-to-back with the scheduled U.S.-EU ministerial troika. According to Austrian officials, over 70 cabinet level ministers from approximately 40 countries will attend the conference. They noted that the U.S. Attorney General has already confirmed his participation in the event but that no response had been received from Secretary Chertoff's office. Presenting U.S. views on the

SIPDIS
security aspects of international migration at this event, and including USG priorities as they relate to the planned "Vienna Declaration", might help us extend these policies to the EU and regions beyond.

McKINLEY

.